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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the degree to which the flexible design of an adult literacy program provided for efficient, effective, and satisfying teacher behavior within the social system of the providing organization. The program was a collaboration of junior high school, business community, community college, and federal agencies intended to enhance the link between home, education, and work in order to encourage lifelong learning. The focus of the study was on role expectations and personality needs of the teachers, and how the literacy program's organization accommodated them. The population served includes students aged 13-21. Seven teachers were observed in the classroom, kept journals, responded to a survey, and participated in interviews. Analysis of the data gathered revealed both facilitative and confrontational qualities in teachers' interaction with peers and administrators. Contains 36 references. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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DEVELOPING LINKAGES BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL: THE LANGUAGE CLUSTER PROGRAM AND ADULT LITERACY

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Bilingual Educators, Orlando, Florida, March 1996.

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ABSTRACT

The initial purpose of this study was to examine the flexibility of the relationship of role expectations and personality needs of teachers in a Language Development Cluster Program for students new to the country. The study looked at the degree to which the flexibility of the program did or did not provide for efficient, effective and satisfying teacher behavior in the social system. The study focused on the experiences and interactions of seven content teachers who have primary responsibility for teaching students new to the United States who attend grades seven through nine.

The initial program under study evolved to include a collaborative effort between the school, business community, community college, Head Start, and Vista Volunteers. This collaboration was designed to develop a linkage between home, education and business which would encourage a community of life-long learners. The focus of the collaboration is an Adult Literacy Program conducted within the regular school setting.

Additional research is in progress to investigate student and parent perceptions of the Language Development Cluster Program and its satellite Adult Literacy Program, keeping in mind the special needs of those students and parents that are new to the United States. This research will be used to document the effect of the satellite Adult Literacy program on student success in the Language Cluster Program.

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Introduction

The ideology of school improvement suggests that state efforts focus on providing more coherent guidance to instruction (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). At a minimum, reform strategies would encompass policies that centrally influence teaching and learning. Providing coherent guidance to instruction is as much a cultural effort as a policy reform task (Cohen and Spillane, 1992). Educators must understand and value new forms of teaching and learning if they are to make instruction more challenging. One way to educate the public and educators, to enlist their important insights and expertise, and to grant them ownership over the reform enterprise, is to involve them in the change process. School improvement research teaches that autonomy or flexibility is a likely precursor to improvement (Fuhrman, 1989).

In 1991, Texas schools were immersed in the process of changing what they were doing in an effort to provide a better education for children. Programs were developed to meet the needs of a diverse population of learners. Graduation rates and test results showed a gap in achievement between particular groups of students. Minority students and those from economically disadvantaged homes reflected the most significant discrepancy in achievement. Statistics reflected rapidly changing demographics that demanded changes in the

educational setting for those students who were new to the United States. The vast majority of these new immigrants were migrating to Texas from Mexico. Meeting the challenge of successfully educating this group of students demanded educational programs that encompassed the tenets of successful school improvement. This research examines a program that was designed to meet the needs of new immigrant students by addressing diversity in culture and learning styles. The overall goals of this "Language Development Cluster School" are a reflection of the school district's philosophy of reducing the gap in student achievement between ethnic and socio-economic groups by meeting their specific educational needs. The cluster concept allows a centralization of resources which makes it possible to concentrate efforts, materials, training, and identification of qualified students. What developed was a needs-specific program that focused on accelerating the academic success of students who had lived in the United States less than two years. Through the evolution of the Cluster Program, other social and familial needs that effected student success became apparent. Satellite programs were then developed to support the Cluster Program. Collaborations were established between the school, business community, community college, Head Start, and Vista Volunteers. These collaborations

fostered an ownership in the program that propelled the necessary changes. What started as a program for students evolved into a comprehensive program to promote the involvement of parents and their children in literacy enhancing practices. The program that now exists empowers parents to make self-identified changes in their personal and family lives that support education in the home and allow them and their children to reach their full personal, social and economic potential. The Cluster Program has changed the way parents value education by enhancing the way they feel about their ability to influence the education of their children. With this ownership established in the change process, the possibility of breaking the cycle of under-achievement for immigrant students is becoming a reality.

Review of the Literature

Kanter (1983) explains change as "a disruption of existing activities, a redirection of organizational energies that may result in new strategies, products, market opportunities, work methods, technical programs, or structures". Although Kanter studied businesses, the definition is equally appropriate for education because of the unique similarities between businesses and schools. Consider schools, like businesses, as organizations designed to meet the needs of customers

(students) by making a certain product (knowledge) available to them. No such clear cut definition exists for "restructuring". The term has been dubbed a "garbage can", a word that has been assigned a variety of meanings with little consensus as to which is truly accurate (Kanter, 1983). Restructuring is usually associated with such issues as site-based decision making, curriculum reform, professionalism of teaching, and decentralization (Tyack, 1990). It is clear, however, that restructuring in education signals a desire by some to completely overhaul the system of education in the United States (Cibulka, 1990). Change is an inevitable part of this process.

Tyack (1990) suggests that restructuring in education is frequently triggered by economic or social concerns. For example, the mid-1900's were characterized by more standardization of schools, including the addition of achievement and I.Q. tests, and an increased emphasis on math and science, primarily as a result of Russia's Sputnik (Passow, 1989). The Civil Rights Movement, as well as court-ordered desegregation in the 1960's produced new challenges for schools. Prayer, Bible reading, and due process for students and teachers became salient issues in the schools (Passow, 1989). Legislation such as Public Law 92-142 and Chapter I

programs were established to serve special-needs students (Tyack, 1990).

International competition and declining test scores produced a new wave of reform during the early 1980's. The 1983 study entitled "A Nation at Risk" brought pressure to the schools to perform - pressure from state and national agencies, as well as the general public (Carnegie Foundation, 1983). The goal was to improve the quality of education, the vehicle was higher expectations for teacher and student performance through top down, mandate driven reform, and the measure was test results. Changes did occur nation wide, but were limited to specific areas (Tyack, 1990). For example, graduation requirements were increased in most states, especially in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Testing programs were expanded for students and teachers. Additional certification requirements were introduced for teachers, and teacher evaluations became more structural (Passow, 1989; Tyack, 1990). This "first wave" of superficial restructuring prompted by the 1983 study has been described as both incremental and fragmented, since it meant adding more to the existing structure, yet lacked a "coherent reform vision" (Cibulka, 1990). The second wave, therefore, is a call to restructure... to remodel or remake the public school as a whole.

Cibulka (1990) notes that many powerful organizations have pointed out the need for restructuring, including the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, the Committee for Economic Development, and the National Governor's Association. Even Shanker's (1990) American Federation of Teachers has recognized the need for dramatic change. The days of the two parent family with the stay-at-home mom are gone, and the changing demographics, including the differential birth rate and the aging population, requires a different educational system than in the past (Shanker; Cibulka). It is also clear that student performance levels are still not acceptable. Test scores, dropout rates, and functional illiteracy are concerns of businesses and parents alike. "Conventional" solutions are simply not working (Cibulka).

Can schools continue with incremental changes and expect improvement, or is there truly a need for the more comprehensive restructuring? It is important here to examine what research tells us about schools and learning. Glickman (1991) and others have studied a number of practices that are commonly accepted, but ultimately do not work. Tracking students, for example, has no known positive effects on students or learning. The performance of high achieving students is not increased, and low-achieving students actually decline.

Nor does failing or retaining students produce positive results. Studies by Shepard and Smith (1990) indicate that achievement of students who are retained at the first grade actually declines over a two year period, and the damage to the students' self-esteem is irreparable. Moreover, teachers can often predict early in the school year who will fail, yet little or no changes are made in the students instruction which might alter this pattern.

Corporal punishment as a means of controlling behavior and "motivating" students has consistently proven unsuccessful. As Glasser (1990) notes, students are not unmotivated. They simply find no reward or satisfaction in completing the dull, routine tasks that are assigned as part of the school ritual. External incentives such as career ladder and merit pay have created competition rather than cooperation among teachers (Glickman, 1991). Brickley and Westerberg (1990) suggest that there is more focus on perpetuating the system than on learning. Emphasis on compliance, on standardized, prescriptive teaching methods, and on highly structured teacher evaluations has tended to squelch innovation and creativity in the classroom (Glickman, 1991), and has involved an unnatural, isolated, depersonalized setting for teachers and students (Brickley and Westerberg). Standardized testing as the sole measure of learning, lock-step grade levels,

and grading based on a normal curve have assured failure for many students by making learning a "one-shot" experience, rather than providing additional opportunities for mastery (Glickman; Brickley and Westerberg). Glickman also suggests that mandated changes, and the focus on the principal as the only instructional leader, have served to de-emphasize the role of teachers in school improvement.

Lezotte (1992) claims that the primary goal of education should be teaching for learning for all students. If we believe this, then our practices should reflect the best knowledge we have about how children learn. Bloom (1976) tells us that most variation in student achievement "is a direct consequence of student involvement in the learning process and of instructional processes used by teachers and others in the school setting". It is the teaching, rather than the teacher, that makes a difference in student learning. Schools control the major variables that determine student learning... the kind and quality of instruction, and time. Bloom's studies also indicate that differences in learning can be reduced, and that the degree of learning, level of competence, and time required can be similar among most students. He explains that by analyzing a student's cognitive entry characteristics, it is possible to determine whether or not the student has the

appropriate prerequisite learning to be successful on a particular task. Affective characteristics determine students' attitudes toward learning, and may indicate the type of instruction to which the student is most likely to respond. By changing instruction, rather than trying to change the student, most students can learn what schools have to teach (Bloom).

Bloom's (1976) research dispels the theory that wide variations in student learning are the norm. By focusing on equality of outcomes, rather than equality of opportunity, variations in student entry behavior can be minimalized. Mastery learning, as Bloom describes it, requires a continuous process of feedback and correctives. Students who need additional instruction or time to complete work are provided these opportunities. One of the most effective methods seems to be the use of frequent, diagnostic-type program tests. Mastery learning requires only ten (10) to twenty (20) percent additional time. Alternative instruction may include group work, the use of instructional aides, tutoring, programmed instruction, and even audio tapes (Bloom).

Everyone can develop talents and abilities if he or she is motivated, receives the appropriate instruction in the proper sequence, and is allowed adequate time. We are all natural learners; from the moment we are born we begin learning and exploring (Bloom, 1976). Children

arrive at school having learned to walk and talk and ride a bike, to feed and dress themselves, to play complex Nintendo games and program the video cassette recorder. Only when they are subjected to the artificial structures of school do children suddenly develop "learning disabilities." If we as educators know that many of our current practices are "killing kids"... producing dropouts, pushouts, and failures ... then we have a moral obligation to change, and to abandon the sorting and selecting function that schools seem to have adopted (Champlin, 1990). The call to restructure is not frivolous.

Several key areas which must be addressed in the restructuring effort have been identified by researchers. Professionalization of teaching is one such area. In order to attract and retain high quality individuals to teaching, improvement in salaries, in working conditions, and in status for teachers is necessary. Curriculum must be revamped to focus on higher level skills, such as analysis and synthesis of information. This means the use of multiple choice, standardized tests should be limited (Cibulka, 1990; O'Neil, 1990). Site-based decision making, or school empowerment is also needed. Kanter (1983) notes that opportunities to "use power effectively", (power being the "capacity to mobilize people and resources to get things done"), determine the

level of innovation or stagnation in an organization. This means that school decisions in all areas, from curriculum and instruction to hiring, should be made by those closest to the impact or implementation of that decision. Teachers and campus level administrators would direct the planning and operation of, and provide leadership for, the school. Clearly this would necessitate redefining personnel roles and accountability. Decentralization and deregulation will be needed, and Cibulka notes that this may create a conflict with those governmental agencies who would seek additional control over the schools. Loosening of state mandates will be necessary to actualize site-based management. Performance incentives for schools, increased parental involvement, including school choice, and state takeovers of poor performing districts have also been discussed as part of the continuing reform.

Kanter (1983) states that "people seem to matter in direct proportion to an awareness of corporate crisis." As long as everything operates smoothly, people are generally ignored. Thoughtful educators and researchers, however, know that people are what truly make a difference in an organization. People are the organization. Educational change must address both the culture and climate of the school. The informed rules, beliefs, values, and norms must be studied, as well as

the formal setting or environment. Trust, caring, and morale are all critical aspects of working with people (Stevens, 1990; Reavis, 1990; Bennis, 1989; Glasser, 1990).

There must be a rationale for change. It should be clear at this point that restructuring necessitates change. Generally speaking, where there is change, there will be resistance. Status quo means comfort and security; change means uncertainty. Educators must recognize resistance and deal with it openly. Fear of the unknown and fear of failure may hamper school improvement efforts, and knowledge is the only solution. School improvement teams must arm themselves with current research, and be data driven in all their decisions. Actions should be intentional rather than accidental, and careful planning and courage are required. Resistors must realize that if we do nothing, a large percentage of our students will continue to fall below an acceptable level of mastery. Reluctant educators may need to see innovation in practice before believing in their merit. They must not be made to feel that they are being personally criticized, but rather that it is time to look to the future (Champlin, 1990). Resistance does not have to be fatal, and Lezotte (1992) urges us to always keep one hand out to those who choose to "board the bus" a little late.

Review of current research, and careful examination of the beliefs and values of a school can help create a rationale for change. David (1991) calls it an invitation to change ... a reason and an opportunity. He suggests that the necessary conditions for change include authority, flexibility, and time, as well as access to knowledge. If educators are to "buy-in" to school restructuring, they must have a stake in the proposed changes, and a stake in the results as well (O'Neil, 1990). David suggests focusing on the following questions: 1) "What do we want students to know and be able to do? 2) What kind of learning experiences produce these outcomes? 3) What does it take to transform schools into places where this happens? 4) Who is responsible for ensuring that the desired results are achieved?"

Processes and procedures must be established. Lezotte (1992) claims there must be some dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs before change becomes desirable. Creating this discontent may be accomplished in several ways. First, a needs assessment may be conducted. Many survey instruments are available commercially and from state agencies. Brookover (1982) and others suggest careful examination of school climate, leadership needs, curriculum and instruction, teachers' expectations for students, and achievement data.

Disaggregation of test results, which consists of comparing the performance of minority and anglo students, high and low income students, and boys and girls, often reveals glaring disparities. The same process can be followed with discipline referrals, absence reports, extra-curricular participation, honor class enrollment, and dropout statistics. This creates a very clear concise picture of who is, and who is not, benefitting from the school's educational program (Brookover, Lezotte, 1982).

Once the need for change is clearly established, there are several alternatives that may be considered. The effective schools research of Edmonds, Lezotte, and others may assist the campus in identifying and addressing needed changes. One German school chose to address student needs by assigning a group of teachers to the same group of students for six consecutive years. The idea is that such continuity will personalize the students' education and increase accountability (Shanker, 1990). Shanker suggests competitions and incentives at the national level, as well as student incentives, may help by stressing student outcomes rather than compliance routines. He also notes a need to re-establish the connection between school performance and job opportunities. Glasser (1990) points out that schools

should be non-coercive; students must learn to recognize quality work and expect the best from themselves.

Altering the school calendar has proven beneficial in some districts. Year-round education is conducive to the reteaching required for mastery learning. Flexible school calendars are better suited to today's changing society, and may serve as a catalyst to other changes at the campus and district levels (Glines, 1991). The role of technology is still largely unexplored, and offers untold opportunities for teaching and learning.

One of the few comprehensive models for school improvement is the Outcomes-Driven Development Model (ODDM). Developed in Johnson City Central School District in New York, ODDM provides a framework for collaborative school improvement. Teachers, administrators, board members, and community members all play roles, as they are all major stake-holders in the public schools. Curriculum and instructional practices, staff development, communication, problem solving, and organizational structures are all addressed through ODDM. As the name implies, the driving force behind ODDM is student exit behaviors, or outcomes. Champlin (1990) calls it "closing the gap between what we know and what we do." All planning and decision-making is based on agreed upon objectives for the school programs (Vickery, 1990; Champlin, 1990).

The promise of system wide change is that it will "produce schools capable of serving the needs of students, educators, and the community at large" (O'Neil, 1990). Restructuring is a call for comprehensive change. No "Band-Aid" approach will work, and there is no cure-all nor one-size-fits-all prescription. However, the difficulty of the task does not excuse us from undertaking it. It is ludicrous and cruel to expect our children to be able to function successfully in the 21st century upon exiting a school model from the 19th century. Schools must be based upon the way children learn, rather than upon the convenience of adults (Champlin, 1990).

ODDM outlines a plan for the entire district, but change begins at the campus level. Indeed, after the failure of mandated change to produce the desired results, it is clear that true innovation must begin from the bottom up, with the smallest possible unit ... the individual. ODDM, site-based decision-making, and higher level thinking skills, are all necessary parts, but it is the people within the school organization and their actions that cause change (Bennis, 1989; Champlin, 1990).

This study looks at the school as a social system and is informed by a classical theory for the purpose of this research: the Getzels-Guba Social Systems Model.

Getzels and Guba conceived the social system as involving two major classes of phenomena, which are at once conceptually independent and phenomenally interactive. Of primary concern in this study will be the flexibility of the organization and how it will impact the effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of the staff (Getzels, Guba, 1957).

Conceptual Framework

Getzels-Guba Social Systems Theory

The Getzels-Guba Model was chosen as the conceptual framework for this study because of the relationship of role expectations and personality needs it addresses for efficient, effective, and satisfying behavior outcome in a social system. Getzels and Guba define the social system as involving two major classes of phenomena, which are at once conceptually independent and phenomenally interactive. First, consider the institution with certain roles and expectations that will fulfill the goals of the system. Secondly, one should consider those inhabiting the system, the individuals with certain personalities and need-dispositions, whose interactions comprise what Getzels-Guba refer to as "social behavior" (Getzels, Guba, 1957).

In order to understand the behavior of specific role incumbents in an organization, you must know both the

role expectations and the need dispositions. According to Getzels-Guba, needs and expectations may both be thought of as motives for behavior, the one deriving from personal propensities, the other from institutional requirements. Social behavior can be conceived as ultimately deriving from the interaction between the two sets of motives.

The Getzels-Guba Model is considered in two dimensions. The nomothetic [organizational] dimension consists of the institution, role, and role expectations, each term being the analytical unit for the term preceding it. Similarly, the idiographic [individual] dimension, consists of individual, personality, and need dispositions, each term serving as the analytical unit for the term preceding it. A given act or behavior is conceived as deriving simultaneously from both the nomothetic and the idiographic dimensions. Social behavior results as the individual attempts to cope with the environment composed of patterns of expectations for his behavior in ways consistent with his own independent pattern of needs (Getzels, Guba, 1957).

The mechanism by which the needs of the institution and the needs of the individual are modified so as to come together is the work group. A dynamic interrelationship exists in the work group, not only of an interpersonal nature, but also between institutional

expectations and the idiosyncratic needs of individual participants. The shaping of the institutional role, the development of a climate within the social system, and the very personality of the participants all dynamically interact with one another. Organizational behavior can be viewed as the product of this interaction.

Getzels and Guba define the institution as being *purposive*, established to carry out certain ends. These ends serve as the criteria against which institutional practices are ultimately evaluated. Institutions are peopled. In order for the institution to carry out its prescribed goal, the human agent is required. Institutions are also structured. In order to carry out a specific purpose requires an organization, and "organization" implies component parts and some rules about how these parts should be interrelated. If the goals and purposes of the institution are known, the tasks to achieve the goals may be specified, and organized into roles. Each role is assigned certain responsibilities and concomitant resources, including authority and facilities for implementation. Allowing more flexibility with regard to the institution, the role, and the expectation will provide for more interaction in the nomothetic dimension.

Flexibility is defined as "allowing pliability, versatility, and adaptability".

Flexibility is viewed as a sub-construct of the Getzels-Guba model, given the construct of congruence. By extension, it could be conferred that flexibility provides for a greater, more efficient, effective interaction between the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions of the Getzels-Guba model.

An example of flexibility is the context of the nomothetic dimension being offered through the lens of the Language Development Cluster Program. The flexibility allowed by the design of the Cluster Program to the teachers provides the opportunity for creativity and for attempting non-traditional approaches to educating limited English-proficient children. The flexibility is applied to the teaching and learning process, not the outcome of student achievement. Improved student achievement is non-negotiable; the process by which improved student achievement is obtained is negotiable.

The Language Development Cluster Program provides for greater flexibility at the campus level with regard to rules and regulations that normally apply to teacher and student practices. Waivers of rules and regulations requested by site-based management teams in an effort to increase student and/or teacher effectiveness are given freely to the school by the state education agency. An example of such a waiver might be a request to increase

the number of staff development days provided for the instructional staff.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to document the flexibility of the relationship of role expectations and personality needs of teachers in the Language Development Cluster Program. The study looked at the degree to which the flexibility of the program did or did not provide for efficient, effective and satisfying teacher behavior in the social system. This study focused on the experiences and interactions of seven content teachers who have primary responsibility for teaching students new to the United States who attend grades seven through nine. For this study, interaction will be considered in the context of teacher to teacher and teacher to administrator.

Research Question

Flexibility of the institution with regard to the teachers' roles and expectations will enhance the interaction between the nomothetic dimension and idiographic dimension of the "Getzels-Guba Model". Flexibility refers to the degree in which an organization will adapt its basic structure and process design to the individual needs of the personnel without compromising

the outcome. It is essential to remember that to reach the desired outcome is a process, not an event.

The greater degree of flexibility in the role expectation of the organization, the greater is the degree of efficient, effective, and satisfying behavior observed as the outcome of the social system (Getzels & Guba, 1957).

The research problem can be stated as two related questions: (1) To what extent do the teachers perceive the language cluster program to allow for flexibility in teaching practices? (2) To what extent do teachers perceive their relationship with the administration to be a flexible one?

Description of the Site

The junior high school chosen for this study compares favorably with the best schools in the nation with regard to physical plant. The school is unique in that it serves not only a comprehensive junior high school program, but also five high school vocational classes as well.

The majority of the parents living in the school attendance area are dependent on the oil industry for their livelihood. The United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis 1991 figures indicate that the per capita annual income for the county

was $15,833 as compared to a per capita income value for the state of $17,248.

Figures for August, 1993, indicate that the county has a work force of 53,700 with an unemployment rate of 8.8 percent. The majority of the community served by the school has less than a high school diploma. This blue collar community supports the school program, encourages regular attendance, and stresses academic achievement.

The community served by the school is highly transient. During the first six weeks of this school year, the school averaged 1.27 withdrawals and 5.42 entries per day. This mobility in the school community is dictated by the ups and downs in the local economy.

The school is one of six junior high schools which serve an unskilled or semi-skilled work force. The school serves the highest minority population of the six junior high schools in the city and has been instrumental in implementing a court-ordered desegregation plan for the county. The data clearly reflect changing minority demographics in the district's secondary schools.

Description of the Sample

The majority of the students at the school are bused students. Utilizing twenty-one buses that log a total of 946.0 miles each day, the district transports 840

students every day. The total enrollment as of September, 1993 reflects this ethnic breakdown:

Anglo	38.24%
Hispanic	57.76%
Black	3.54%
A. Indian	.36%
Asian/Pacific Island	.10%

Students attending the school tend to be from families that are considered to be economically disadvantaged. The percentage of students on the free or reduced meal program ranges from 68.00% in the seventh grade to 56.00% in the ninth grade. A growing trend among the student body is a proliferation of families experiencing economic difficulties and receiving some type of federal assistance.

From 1984 to 1990 the district's minority population increased by 1,095 students. Of this increase, 6.83% is reflected in the minority population of the school identified for this study. The school's changing neighborhood demographics may be indicative of the increased population of students in at-risk situations.

Description of the Program

The unique Language Development Cluster Program concept addresses many needs. The following features are the focus of the cluster school organization:

- The Language Development Cluster Program intakes and diagnoses all monolingual immigrant students new to the district.

- Students are grouped by age. The 13 and 14 year-old students are placed in pre-junior high designated classroom/s utilizing a Chapter I school-wide self-contained model. This model reduces the pupil/teacher ratio to 15/20:1 thus ensuring small group teacher-directed instruction, individualized instruction, and an effective use of proximics. Each teacher is responsible for reinforcing all subject matter through ESL (English as a Second Language) methodology.
- The 15-21 year-old students are placed in pre-senior high designated self-contained classroom/s. The average class size is 20, yet services provided by an instructional aide assigned to the cluster program reduce the pupil/teacher ratio.

- The Cluster Program provides an intensive English language development curriculum for the major part of the day, allowing students to be mainstreamed for elective courses. Primary goals of the program include: (1) to return these students to their neighborhood junior and high school settings as quickly as possible, and (2) to provide the cluster students the educational and social skills necessary to complete their secondary education.

- Materials are selected for adaptability and flexibility in building the basic structures of the English language while maintaining the natural language approach philosophy. The Cluster Program will serve as a depository for all district ESL textbooks and materials.

- Part of the school district's technology plan calls for a computer language laboratory that will be utilized as an excellent vehicle for instructing and motivating these students. At present several computers will be placed in each classroom.

- The principal provides strong instructional leadership, operating in accordance with elements of effective schooling and middle-

level education, emphasizing high expectations for students' learning as he guides staff in the appropriate delivery of instruction.

- Parents view themselves as partners in education, as they participate in classroom observations, volunteer in classrooms, give input during Block Party Advisory Council (BPAC) meetings, and attend classes to learn English and enhance their parenting skills.

- Students, teachers, and parents share ownership in the school knowing that the school was especially selected for its leadership and empathy towards the future economic well being of their children and the school district. This contributes significantly to a positive school/classroom climate in which students view themselves as integral parts of the school.

- The Cluster Program concept allows staff to continually assess and enhance second language acquisition techniques.

- The Cluster Program concept allows staff to maintain consistency in the effective delivery of instruction to recent immigrant students.

- The Cluster Program concept provides an environment which fosters and nurtures confidence and self esteem.

- "At-risk" factors prevalent among recent immigrant youth are diminished because the Cluster Program focuses on improving student's self-concept as a preventative measure.

- The Cluster Program concept fosters the establishment of a model/replicable program which impacts greater numbers of recent immigrant students, not only in this district but throughout the state and nation.

The students in the Language Development Cluster Program are selected for services based on the following criteria:

- At the lowest entry age level, the student must be 13 years old (junior high) or 15 years old (senior high) by September 1 of the current academic year.

- Students and parents must have immigrated to the United States within the past two (2) calendar years.

- Students between the ages of 13 through 21 years who are of recent immigrant status qualify for the program.

- Students who have never been enrolled in any other school district in the United States will be assigned to the Language Development Cluster Program for a maximum of (2) years. *

* Exception: Immigrant students who have been enrolled in other school districts prior to enrollment in the school district, where no intensive language development occurred, may be enrolled in the Language Development Cluster Program for a maximum of one year. Based on the recommendation of the teacher team, a student may exit or remain at the cluster school as space allows. Special considerations will be approved by the principal.

The program is designed to meet the needs of non-English speaking students who have, within a set period

of time, moved into the United States from foreign countries. Students are placed in self-contained classes that emphasize the basic English communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Other features included in the design are: (1) computer language centers (2) Career Investigation, (3) Migrant tutoring, and (4) before or after school regular tutoring.

The specific linguistic needs are identified initially through an oral interview with the student. If further assessment is needed, the student is administered the Maculaitis Language Proficiency Test (MAC). The test provides information on four areas of language: Oral Expression, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing Ability. A global English competency score indicates the instructional level. Students scoring at the beginning level of English language proficiency who are of recent immigrant status are assigned to the Cluster Program for a maximum of two years of intensive English language development. The Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE) is an additional measure used for determining the level of literacy in the Spanish language.

Recognizing that the District was faced with a unique student population which could not be evaluated in the same manner as the students in Title 1 and regular programs, the school explored alternative methods of measuring program effectiveness. Traditional measures of achievement will not measure the impact of a program on

recent immigrant students. In addition, as a norm-referenced test, the NAPT does not recognize the recent immigrant student as an integral part of the norm in which students are compared to each other according to a set of standards. It is a fallacy to use achievement test measures in English to evaluate programs for non-English speaking students because immigrant students have developed skills and concepts in their native language but not in English. An alignment from what has been learned and what is being tested does not exist when a student is tested with an English achievement test.

The average educational (level) background of the ESL teachers is a bachelor's degree, with all of the teachers having either bilingual or ESL certification (or presently working on their endorsement). The subject area teachers (Math and Science) in the Cluster Program are obtaining ESL certification.

All personnel are annually provided with structured inservice training in topics identified at the campus level by the cluster teacher team. The initial year's inservice schedule has been structured with the assistance of several ESL consultants. Project-specific staff development activities are conducted at the Cluster School for all project participants.

Selection of materials and delivery of instruction is based on second language acquisition theory and use of the natural approach as a technique.

Materials are selected for their adaptability and flexibility in building the basic structures of the English language such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Language acquisition theory is used as the basis for selection of materials. Sight vocabulary through Dolch and Fry lists, Developmental Learning Materials (DLM) picture cards, books based on ESL methods such as Alfa. Steps to English. Intercom, and English Across the Curriculum are example of materials used. Methods and equipment vary from visual to auditory, depending on the lesson and the needs of the students.

Computers provide an excellent vehicle for reaching the less motivated students and improving attitudes toward learning as academic tasks become more enjoyable. Students are scheduled on a rotating basis to the computer language centers. Intensive listening and speaking exercises correlated to classroom instruction are the focus of the computer language centers. Students' language needs are carefully diagnosed, prescribed, and monitored. Appropriate listening and speaking exercises are prescribed in the language laboratory to fit students' individual needs. ESL software has been carefully selected and correlated to the core curriculum.

Cluster Program students benefit from the instructional materials, library resources, mentoring and workplace experiences or fieldtrips made possible through local funds, Compensatory Education, Title 1 Migrant, State Bilingual, Bilingual Grant and Emergency

Immigration Education Act funds provided to the local university, and local business partnerships. Specialized services such as those offered within the Special Education program are also available to students.

Program evaluation is conducted at the end of each school year. Immigrant students in the Language Development Cluster Program are administered the local diagnostic test of language proficiency on a pre and post test basis in order to determine growth in English language proficiency. On-going student assessment is conducted continually throughout the year; thus, program impact is measurable at different intervals during the year. The cluster team is responsible for developing an educational plan for each student making recommendations for course placement at the receiving school, and documenting pre- determined data for future program analysis.

Methodology

The methodology of participant observation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) is a method where the researcher enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know, be known and trusted by them, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed. As primary administrator of the campus under study, with permission of the participants, access was gained. The participants gave signed consent to

participate in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by the researcher. As a participating member of the staff, I directly observed teacher interactions on a weekly basis and participated in all staff meetings. The time frame for these observations was March 24, 1994 through April 21, 1994.

The seven staff members kept teacher journals of the daily interactions with each other, the students, and the administration (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Although not as intimate or revealing as a diary, this information provides the qualitative researcher with a more substantial idea about what life is like for the participant. Participants were encouraged to be as specific as possible in this endeavor.

Open-ended questionnaires (Strauss, 1987) were given to the participants prior to an audio-taped interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) with the researcher. Both sources of data provide detailed and descriptive accounts of the interactions between the researcher and participant. The open-ended questionnaires (Appendix A) were specific to the amount of flexibility allowed in teaching in the language cluster program. In addition, the issue of the flexibility of the relationship between the teacher and the administrator was addressed.

Based on the information provided from the questionnaires, more in-depth interviews with the participants were conducted in the final week of the study. I was able to extend specific responses made by

the participants. The interviews provided details not present in the written response questionnaire.

The Participants

The sample for this study consisted of seven teachers in the Language Development Cluster Program. The group was composed of five females and two males. The level of experience ranged from three years to twenty-four years. There were four Hispanics and three Anglos. Five of the participants are bilingual, speaking both Spanish and English. All of the participants were trained and certified in English as a Second Language (ESL) methodologies.

Data Analysis

The writer analyzed the journals, interview transcripts, responses to open-ended questionnaires and personal notes made during field observations. The primary method of content analysis was to read through and identify specific coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Valued data were represented by sentences and paragraphs that specifically informed the theoretical framework via the research questions: (A) Interactions between teacher/teacher (B) Interactions between teacher/administrator. Four primary categories were identified from the data: **(A) interactions**

(B) flexibility (C) collaboration (D) confrontation. From these major categories, sub-categories were identified to assist in the analysis.

Interaction

Teacher/Teacher. Due to the necessity for close communication within the program, teacher interaction was illustrated in two primary ways. The researcher observed facilitative interaction between teacher/teacher and confrontational interaction between teacher/teacher.

Facilitative interaction, for the purpose of this study, will be those actions that occur teacher to teacher that propel flexibility, autonomy, and collaboration with respect to overall program goals. The data reflected this facilitative interaction numerous times in the interviews and questionnaires. This facilitative interaction develops between the relationship of the role expectation and the individual personality needs it addresses for efficient, effective, and satisfying behavior in the social system.

The following quotes best illustrate the facilitative interactions between the participants:

> "What teamwork! We are all looking forward to the field trip."
>
> "I needed several hours to prepare my students to present our play. All of the teachers were supportive and understanding of my need. We were able to get the consecutive rehearsal time and our play was super."
>
> "Mrs. _____ has been such a great help for me! She's trying very hard to supply our programs with the necessary books that are beneficial

> to our students. I really appreciate all of her help and effort!"
>
> "I don't know what I would have done without the support of the other teachers...especially in parent conferences."
>
> "Thank goodness for Mrs. _____. She made several phone contacts for me. She is such a a great help. I don't know what I would do without her."
>
> "One teacher reinforces the other by giving correctly measured amounts of understandable English. I can give my instruction in Spanish and English. We are all helping the student all day long make the transition from Spanish to English. This does not happen in the regular mainstream classroom environment. This is a major reason "sheltered English" was created."
>
> "The camaraderie is encouraging. Just to have several people who work with you and help and smile...over the same kids and responsibilities. We give each other moral support."
>
> "Excellent staff interaction exists."

The quotes cited above are indicative of the positive relationship the individual members of this program have with each other. They are so focused on students, cooperation and success. The very personalities of the participants all dynamically interact with one another.

Confrontational interaction between teacher/teacher was an exception. Confrontation is defined as a moment in time when there is opposition to a thought or idea. The data did not reveal a great deal in this category. Confrontation did, however, exist. Confrontation between teacher/teacher is illustrated in the following quotes:

"_____ gets mad easily if you do not accept her opinion as the gospel truth."

"We monitored the test area. _____ and _____ sat down most of the time. I assume this was women's work."

"_____ has a way of rubbing people the wrong way."

"I told _____ that she needed to change kids around before she finalized the schedule...she would not listen to me!"

"During the test, we had too many teachers first period and only two at the end of the day. It wasn't possible to control the students well during the oral tests. Poor planning."

"The surface problem was her assertion that a monitor cannot grade papers or do anything else during the testing."

All of the interactions reflecting confrontation with the group centered around one three day testing period prescribed for the students. It seems that the change in assignments and schedules really was disturbing to the group. More importantly, the lead teacher designed the schedule without the collaboration of the rest of the group.

The interaction between teachers in the Language Development Cluster Program provides the opportunity for creativity and for attempting non-traditional approaches to educating limited English-proficient children.

Teacher/Administrator. In the context of this research, the administrator will represent the institution. This interaction reflects the role and role expectation of the principal. The Language Development Cluster Program, by design, has enabled a very positive

interaction between the teachers in the program and the administration (the building principal).

With regard to **facilitative interaction** between the teachers/administrators, the data revealed the following:

> "My relationship with the administration is a flexible one. I feel that our administration has supported our program. Our principal sits in and participates in our weekly meetings. I feel the administration is genuinely interested in student and teachers. In turn, I feel loyal and want to do the best job I can, carrying out my duties and responsibilities. I feel that when I do my best at my work, the chances for getting support from the administration are greater. I believe it works two ways."

> "I think that the administration at _____ is a flexible one. I feel this way because I can communicate with the administrator whenever I need help."

> "I feel that my relationship with the administration is a flexible one. When I felt that a student was placed in the wrong class, I received help from the principal. I can go to my principal with a problem or grievance and feel confident that he will help me."

> "I have a positive working relationship with my school's administration, because we share a common goal and vision."

> ".....there has been an extensive growing process and development of congenial relationships among the teacher and administration."

> "_____ has always given us support and a vision. He attends our weekly meetings. This keeps us focused on our goal: for students to make the transition from Spanish to English while acquiring the content areas."

> "(The principal) is aware of the needs of the families of these students. During the holidays, they have received clothing and food."

> "(The principal) has been a force to help the population be productive citizens."

There was an overall positive feeling with regard to the interaction between the administration and the teachers. The comments make were sincere and reflected the effort from both the administration and the teachers to develop a strong collaborative relationship.

However, there were areas of conflict identified by the participants. Identified as **conflict/confrontation** were areas out of the control of the campus administration. The conflicts identified were:

> "..... should be awarded the same stipend as the other bilingual teachers."

> "We as teachers cannot perform to our full potential if we have closet size rooms! Although some of us are lucky to have a closet size room, whereas other cluster teachers are floating because of the limited school rooms and overcrowding of students in the district."

The concerns of conflict/confrontation are not unlike those experienced throughout the state with regard to budget constraints. Districts are experiencing shortfalls of financial support from the state, declining property values at the local level, and an increased number of mandated programs without adequate funding to support the mandates.

The **flexibility** provided by the Language Development Cluster Program provides for a greater, more efficient, effective interaction between the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions of the Getzels - Guba Model. The flexibility allowed the teachers in the Language

Development Cluster Program provides those teachers the opportunity for creativity and for attempting non-traditional approaches to educating limited English-proficient children. The flexibility is applied to the process or to the relationships of role expectations and personality needs of teachers in the Language Development Cluster Program. This is accomplished by means of open communication, flexibility of time on task, a unique understanding of the home and where the students come from and planned collaboration with parents, students, community members and business coalitions, teachers and school administrators.

Conclusions and Implications

This study has provided insight to the extent the teachers perceive the Language Development Cluster Program as providing flexibility in teaching practices and to what extent teachers perceive their relationship with the administration to be a flexible one. This study also provides a unique perspective to the special needs of the teachers. Additional research is in progress to investigate student and parent perceptions of the Language Development Cluster Program and its satellite Adult Literacy Program, keeping in mind the special needs of those students and parents that are new to the United States.

As we "restructure" our educational system, the model of delivery discussed in this research is one to be looked at carefully. This researcher observed a pride and enthusiasm in the participants that does not appear to be present in many arenas of education. While the Language Development Cluster Program is not a "perfect" program, it has provided us with a foundation for renewal.

The Language Development Cluster Program is in a constant state of change in order to better meet the needs of faculty, administration, community, and, most importantly, the students. The program strives from within to always be better. By extension, satellite programs have developed to promote literacy in the family unit. Research in progress appears to support the position that the program and its satellites have strengthened the relationship between parents and the school. Together they have reduced barriers to parent involvement in the schools through the introduction of an Adult Literacy program. This program provides relevant activities that facilitate the success of parent participants. The curriculum of the Adult Literacy Program enables the participants to increase their ability to read, write, and speak real workplace English, and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function in society. A variety of instructional methods are used in the Adult Literacy Program, including a "hands-on" approach to learning English, supplemented with computer technology,

traditional texts, workbooks, newspapers, storybooks, and conversational opportunities. In linking the education of parents and children, the side benefits reaped include a strengthening of the family, increased self-esteem for both parent and child, improvement of coping skills, and fostering attitudes that are necessary in positive skill building for good jobs and a higher standard of living.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are based on the site and the participants in the study. These limitations are as follows:

1. The students in the Language Cluster Program at this study site are primarily Hispanic. Results may not transfer easily to a site with a different cultural diversity.
2. The location of the study was an urban setting. Results may not transfer easily to a rural or suburban school population.
3. The participants in the study have limited teaching experience outside the district where the study was located. Transferability of the results to a site with a more diversified staff may be limited.

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APPENDIX A

EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE CLUSTER PROGRAM

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questions as throughly as possible as they apply to you. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

1. Describe how the design of the language cluster program has allowed you greater or less flexibility in your teaching practices.

2. Do you feel that the design of the language cluster program has allowed you more flexible time utilization in your teaching practices?

Yes No

Describe why you feel this way.

3. Do you feel that your relationship with the administration at Ector Junior High School is a flexible one?

Yes No

Describe why you feel this way.

4. Give specific examples to illustrate your answer to #3.

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- OLD HABITS PERSIST IN SPITE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

- PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH THE PARENTS
- DEVELOP A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL TRUST
- PROVIDE A COMMON GROUND FOR DIALOG

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- medical services available
- financial services available
- legal issues
- citizenship requirements
- educational opportunities for adults
- educational opportunities for pre-school

- Provide the forum to discuss school issues on the following:

  - attendance
  - classwork and homework policies
  - guidance and testing services
  - food services and transportation
  - parent involvement (VIPS&PTSA)
  - discipline
  - gangs & drug problems

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- CHANGING DEMOGRAGHICS
- COMMUNITY NEED
- COLLABORATION
- EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS
- NEW KNOWLEDGE
- COMMITMENT

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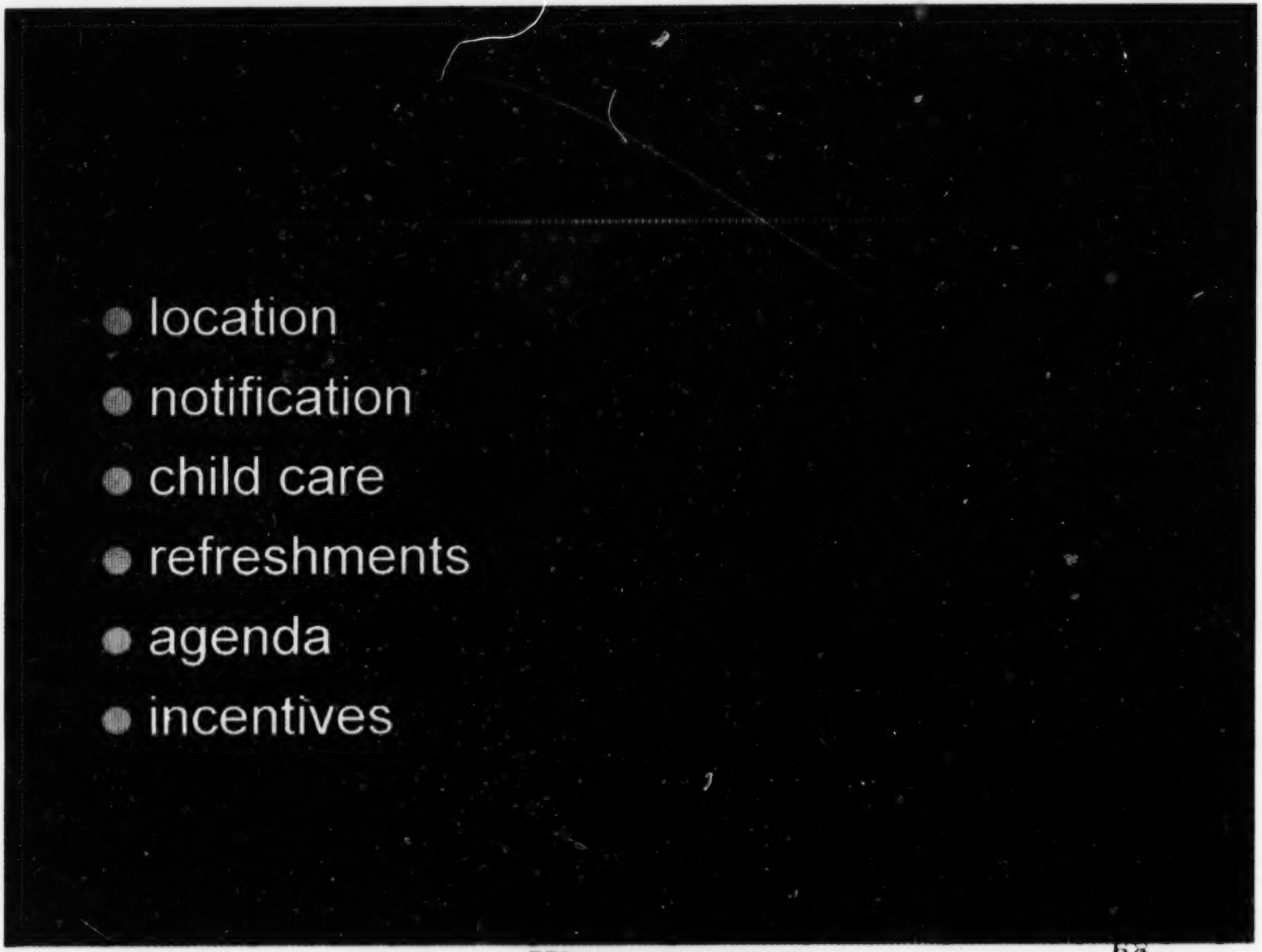

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- improves communication
- increases trust factor (parents & students)
- increases parent participation
- improves student performance
- improves attendance
- improves discipline & student responsibility

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- JUST DO IT !

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